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HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Religion is the chief differentiating characteristic of man. No animal has to human knowledge displayed any evidences of religious life. Certain human individuals do seem to be lacking in religious interest, yet mankind as a whole is universally religious. In the history of mankind, there never has been a tribe of man without some form of religion. In the oldest monuments of civilized man as shown in the pyramids of Egypt, religious convictions, aspirations, and practices are in evidence.

Religion has been one of the most powerful factors in human history. Other aspects of human life have indeed been important, yet the binding force that has held man together throughout his entire history has been his religion.

Religion gives to a person what he can obtain from no other source, a confidence in the outcome of life's struggle through a personal connection with the superior Power or powers in the world. Every religion does many things for the religious individual and also for the society. For example, it assists in providing the individual with added power and satisfaction; it helps him to bear the trouble of life uncomplainingly; it offers a solution to the problem of evil; it improves the quality of this present life; it offers the hope of a better life in the future; it

outlines an ideal society; it sets a working plan of salvation.[1] Religion is also so complex that it needs to be defined so as to be completely understood. Religion, as defined by Emile Durkheim, emphasizes as factors in religious life, (1) the need for objectivity as a basis for any intepretations of social life and (2) the need for certainty as a necessity.[2]

Religion is partly intellectual, partly emotional, and partly an act of the will. It always involves reference to an object of faith and of worship. What constitutes a person's religion is his belief in some God, or gods, and his experience with that God.

Religion is functionally a necessary part of society and not likely to disappear through changes or social conditions in society. Durkheim was to write in his Elementary Forms of Religious Life:

> There is something eternal in religion which is destined to survive all the particular symbols in which religious thought has successively enveloped itself. There can be no society which does not feel the need of upholding and reaffirming at regular intervals the collective ideas which makes its unity and its personality.[3]

An interesting and important development in the recent history of the United States concerning religion, is the rise of numerous pentecostal denominations in the twentieth century. In the past two decades the pentecostal groups have grown to tremendous numbers. For many years they were dismissed by theological scholars as being fanatic and irrelevant.

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[1] Robert Ernest Hume, The World's Living Religions (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), p. 5.

[2] Religion is defined as a "unified system of beliefs relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden...beliefs and practices which unite one moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them." See Emile Durkheim, Elementary Forms of Religious Life, trans. by J. W. Swain (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1911), p. 47.

[3] Ibid., p. 427.

But these groups, a part of our religious and cultural history cannot be overlooked.

Recent developments have caused a mounting interest in both perfectionism and pentecostalism by both scholars and the public alike. The phenomenal growth rates of these churches since World War II, contrasted with declining growth rates among the traditional denominations, has caused some concern in many religious circles.[1] Almost every major denomination now has its own pentecostal element. One of the most recent being the Roman Catholic Church. With the large number of Pentecostal churches in such countries as Chile, Brazil, and South Africa, it has been predicted by some that the future center of Christianity will be in the southern hemisphere, non-white, and pentecostal.

The Pentecostal movement is generally thought to be a product of America, but to trace its origin one would have to go back to the New Testament times. The events that occurred on the Day of Pentecost, when the apostles were given the charismatic gift of speaking with tongues paved the way for the pentecostal movement. Although the gift of speaking with tongues had begun to disappear by the beginning of the fourth century, not to appear again, until Quaker times, most modern pentecostals would assert that from the day of the first pentecost, instances of speaking with tongues has existed and it is now reappearing with greater clarity than before. This is to say that in one form or another it has manifested itself throughout the history of the Christian Church.[2]

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[1]Vinson Synan, The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1971), p. 7.

[2]John Thomas Nichols, Pentecostalism (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 19.

Review of the Literature

Vinson Synan builds a good case for the interracial origins of the Pentecostal Movement. In his book, The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States, he states that Charles F. Parham and William J. Seymour share equal positions as founders of the Pentecostal Movement. He acknowledges that Parham laid the doctrinal foundations of the movement, while Seymour served as the catalytic agent for its popularization. In this sense, the early pentecostal movement could be classed as neither "Negro" nor "white", but as interracial.[1]

Suddenly . . . From Heaven by Carl Brumback, has a section entitled "Call No Man Father". In this section Brumback says, Pentecostalism can call no man father of twentieth century pentecost. To find the father, one must look beyond the merely human to the divine, even as one must look beyond the Apostles to find the Father of the first-century pentecost. The Pentecostalists regard the absence of a progenitor of their movement as an indication that this mighty revival was begotten directly by an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit.[2]

John Hardon, simply indicates that there were two leaders that stood out in the history of Pentecostalism, Charles Fox Parham and William J. Seymour. Parham was a white man and Seymour was black, which explains the interracial character of many pentecostal churches. He goes on to mention that Parham's disciple, Seymour carried the pentecostal message

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[1]Synan, The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States.

[2]Carl Brumback, Suddenly . . . From Heaven (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1961).

to California and attracted large crowds in the now famous Azusa Street Revival. In his book The Protestant Churches of America, he states that in three years Azusa attracted the curious and fervent from all parts of America and even from overseas.[1]

John Thomas Nichols, in his book Pentecostalism, feels that modern Pentecostalism should begin with Charles Fox Parham. Nichols gives the position of Father of Contemporary Pentecostalism to Parham. He reminds us that it was Parham's Pentecostal doctrines that started the Pentecostal Movement.[2]

Dr. Walter J. Hollenweger, who has written a multi-volume study on Pentecostalism, believes that the Pentecostal Movement began in the Black community. Hollenweger argues from primary and secondary sources that the Azusa Street Mission is regarded by Pentecostal publicists as the place of origin of the Worldwide Pentecostal Movement. As stated in an article by Hollenweger, which appeared in the periodical Concept, Parham was given credit as being the original leader of the Azusa Street Revival. But since 1907, his name no longer appears on the official letterhead of the organization. In 1908 the whites withdrew. In regard to the Black origins of the Pentecostal Movement, Hollenweger raised a question, "Why did pentecost begin within the Black community"? He replies:

> Theologically one must answer that it was God's providence. As he chose the despised children of Israel to bring blessings to the whole world, he chose against Black people to bring blessings to the church universal.[3]

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[1]John A. Hardon, The Protestant Churches of America (Westminister: The Newman Press, 1957).

[2]John Thomas Nichols, Pentecostalism.

[3]Walter J. Hollenweger, "Black Pentecostal Concept: Interpretations

Scope and Purpose

From reviewing the literature on the Pentecostal Movement in America, several points of view were revealed concerning the origins and founding of the movement. The more prominent views were:

1. Pentecostalism began during the turn of the century under the leadership of Charles Fox Parham.

2. The Pentecostal Movement began in the ghettos of Los Angeles in 1906, under the leadership of William J. Seymour and was completely Black in its origin.

3. The Pentecostal Movement began as a completely interracial movement, under the leadership of Charles F. Parham and William J. Seymour. Starting in Topeka, Kansas with Parham and in Los Angeles with Seymour.

4. The Pentecostal Movement had no human father. It was the Holy Spirit sent by God to initiate the movement.

The primary purpose of this work is to briefly review the history of the Pentecostal Movement in America, and to bring out the fact that the Black community had a major part in the founding and development of the movement.

Methodology

This work is accomplished in three basic parts. The first section will deal specifically with the origin and development of the Pentecostal Movement in America.

The second section will be concerned with the role Black Americans played in the development of the Pentecostal Movement.

The third section will be a summation and analysis of Chapters II and III.

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and Variations," Concept No. 30 June, 1970.

The main sources of information were theological reference materials. The scope of these materials ranged from books, magazines, newspapers, journals, and interviews with instructors and students at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

In historical perspective the Pentecostal movement was the child of the Holiness movement, which in turn was a child of Methodism.[1] The Pentecostal movement originated among those who were already active Christians in search of some kind of religious experience lacking in their churches. John Wesley's teachings gave them the missing link in their religion. Wesley s doctrine of perfection involved two separate phases of experience for the believer: the first, conversion, or justification, and the second, Christian perfection, or sanctification. In the first experience the penitent was forgiven for his sins by becoming a Christian. The second experience could be achieved only through self-examination, godly disciple, and worldly pleasures. This experience purified the believer of his inward sins and gave him love for God and man.

When Methodism hit America, Wesley's teachings of entire sanctification came along with it. The Methodist religion flourished in America until the Civil War. The war caused many Americans to become almost entirely political and secular. The dispute over slavery blocked the

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[1] Synan, The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States, p. 115.

growth of the Methodist movement.

After the war ended a moral depression existed in America. In a matter of a few decades the American population had shifted from rural to urban. The industrialization and growth of cities caused such a change in the lives and attitudes of the American people, that it inevitably led to social and political rootlessness.

The democracy and individualism of the age led to a gradual weakening of tradition with respect to the church. Never before in this country's history has the church been stronger in membership and weaker in spiritual soundness.[1] Natural science was considered the real science. Reality was exclusively what could be pointed out by science. The correct picture of real life was totally different from the one in which the biblical authors had believed. The faith in the authority of the Bible, the truth of Christianity and the existance of God itself, became to many people scientific impossibilities.[2] Darwinism and socialism challenged the traditional theories of man's origin, causing sharp cleavage between believers and dividing churches. No denomination went unattacked by the ferment of the times.

The church, keeping pace with the developing nation, became increasingly wealthy and institutionalized. It began doing away with the old traditions of the church. Revivals were no longer held. The wooden churches were razed, and magnificent brick buildings replaced them.

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[1] John Thomas Nichols, Pentecostalism, p. 25.

[2] Nils Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement (New York: Humanities Press, 1964), p. 10.

Spirited congregational singing and shouting ministers were replaced by robed choirs and trained ministers. In short the popular churches once known as the poor man's church had been transformed into churches of the upper middle class. Thus the structure of society formed reactionary movements. The Pentecostal movement can be counted as one.

The Holiness movement, in which the pentecostal movement had its main roots, represented a counterweight among the lower classes to the liberal thinking of the upper and middle classes.[1] In leaving the older churches, the holiness people were protesting against these "modernistic" developments and were attempting to keep alive the old time religion which seemed in danger of dying out in American Protestantism.[2] The Holiness group believed that society could only be perfected with the second coming of Christ.

Most of the Holiness groups began in the decade after 1894. Of the score or more of major holiness groups existing at this time, only four later became pentecostal, and all with locations in the South. All of the Holiness groups believed in John Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification as a second grace of God.

The main groups that the holiness advocates wished to help, the poor and the underprivileged, were the very ones that joined the Holiness and Pentecostal churches. The Holiness people taught a negative form of gospel. Rather than trying to reform to society, they rejected it. They did not see poverty and inequality as social sins, rather the

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[1] Synan, The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States, p. 57.

[2] Ibid., p. 58.

the evil effects of theater, liquor, cigarettes, and make up.

Two large denominations resulted from the National Holiness Movement, the Church of the Nazarene, and the Pilgrim Holiness Church. Other small groups started during this time but because of their small size and lack of significant growth, they played a minor role in the holiness and later pentecostal movement. One of the most remembernable denominations that issued from the national movement was the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church. Benjamin H. Irwin, founded the church in Iowa in 1895.

Irwin influenced by the writings of John Fletcher believed that there was a third experience beyond sanctification. The third experience was the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire. Having already been sanctified, Irwin began to seek the baptism for himself. Eventually he received such an experience. Afterwards he began to preach the third experience to the holiness people. Many Holiness churches rejected his teachings of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and forbade him to preach in their churches.

Despite this opposition Irwin continued to preach about the third experience, until finally the whole holiness movement became acquainted with his doctrines. The opposition from the Iowa Holiness Association caused Irwin to leave the association. It was then he formed the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church. The Fire-Baptized Holiness movement spread across the midwest to the south, forming many new churches. The movement was prevented from becoming the national church that it promised to be, when it was discovered that Irwin had been living a life of sin. Irwin resigned as leader and a young follower took over as leader.

The Fire-Baptized Holiness Church served as an important link in the chain that later produced the Pentecostal Movement.[1] The conservative holiness groups, which did not agree with the third experience only constituted a small proportion of the holiness population of the Southern and Midwestern states. The third experience, "baptism" with the "Holy Spirit" was to become the religious position of the coming Pentecostal Movement.

Origins in Kansas, and Local Expansion

Before the Pentecostal Movement sprang into being, there existed in the United States instances of individuals and small groups, that had experienced the spirit baptism manifested by speaking with tongues. But only from the beginning of 1901, can a real Pentecostal movement be spoken of and this movement was rather unpretentious and localized until 1906.

It was in 1900, that Charles Fox Parham opened the Bethel Bible School at Stone Mansion, in Topeka, Kansas. In his teachings he emphasized sanctification, divine healing, and from the end of the 1900's, spirit baptism manifested itself by speaking with tongues. From reading Acts 2:2, Parham and his students came up with the idea that speaking with tongues was evidence of being baptized with the Holy Spirit. The first to receive the experience at the school was, Miss Agnes N. Ozman.

Miss Ozman relates her story:

> We studied the Bible by day and did much work downtown at night. . .Prayer was offered night and day continually in a special upper room set apart as a prayer tower. I had

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[1] Ibid., p. 68.

> many blessed hours of prayer in this room during the night watches. . . Like some others, I thought that I had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost at a time of consecration, but when I learned that the Holy Spirit was yet to be poured out in greater fullness, my heart became hungry for the promised Comforter, and I began to cry out for an enduement of power from on high. At times, I longed more for the Holy Spirit to come than for my necessary food. At night I had a greater desire for him than for sleep . . . During the first day of 1901, the presence of the Lord was with us in a marked way, stilling hearts to wait upon Him for greater things. The spirit of prayer was upon us in the evening. It was nearly eleven o clock when it came into my heart to ask that hands might be laid upon me that I might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. As hands were laid upon my head, the Holy Spirit fell upon me, and I began to speak in tongues, glorifying God . . . It was as though rivers of living water were proceeding from my innermost being.[1]

Classes were suspended and everyone at the school waited in eager anticipation for the Holy Spirit. They believed that what God had done for one he would do for the rest. The waiting ended on the night of January third. Rev. Parham was away conducting a meeting, while the students remained at the school longing to receive the Holy Spirit. Suddenly twelve students began to speak with other tongues. Rev. Parham, returning to the school, heard strange sounds on the second floor. The twelve students were speaking with other tongues. Parham, overcome by what he was seeing, fell to his knees, unnoticed by the others and began to speak in tongues. Many Pentecostal historians feel these events signify the birth of the Pentecostal Movement, and the establishment of Parham as founder. However, it was not Parham but W. J. Seymour that drew people from every country to the Worldwide Azusa revival.

The Pentecostal Movement spread to other areas slowly. As people

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[1]Stanley H. Frodsham, With Signs Following (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1946), p. 20.

became familiar with the new message, it lost its charm and there were signs of stagnation during 1901-1903; possibly until early 1905. The new movement was met with opposition and locked doors in many denominations.

In the fall of 1903, the Pentecostal Movement made some progress due to the experience of Mrs. Mary A. Authur. Mrs. Authur, who had been suffering from several illnesses for many years, was anointed and prayed for while spending the summer in Eldorado Springs. She was completely cured of all illnesses. She returned to her hometown Galena, Kansas, bringing the pentecostal message with her. A large revival was held in the city. Many were saved, healed, and filled with the spirit.

The revivals spread to the nearby cities of Joplin, Missouri, Columbus, Melrose, and Baxter Springs, Kansas. At first the work did not have the same sweeping results as in Galena, but by 1905 an assembly had been established in each of the towns.

Mr. and Mrs. T. W. Oyler and Mrs. Anna Hall brought the pentecostal message to Orchard, Texas in the Spring of 1904. They conducted a few meetings there that stirred the community. Mrs. C. Calhoun, of Houston heard of these meetings and decided to attend a Sunday morning service. Mrs. Calhoun witnessed speaking with tongues for the first time. She returned to her home and testified to her pastor W. F. Carothers and his Holiness congregation, what she had experienced. The congregation accepted her testimony favorably. Rev. C. F. Parham arrived in Houston a few months later to conduct a revival.

According to reports, the revival in Houston was attended by visions and strange healings. Houston became the center of the movement until Los Angeles took over the leadership.

Azusa Street Revival

It was in Los Angeles that the Pentecostal movement took root and prospered. The Doctrinal revolution which occured in the holiness movement in 1906 came to the attention of the religious world through reports of a sensational revival meeting in Los Angeles. The city of the Angels was first told of the new movement in a report to the Los Angeles Times on April 18, 1906. Under a headline proclaiming "Weird Babel of Tongues", the writer reported that, "breathing strange utterances and mouthing a creed which it would seem no sane mortal could understand, the newest sect has started in Los Angeles.[1]

The paper reported:

> . . . meetings are held in a tumble down shack on Azusa Street, near San Pedro Street, and the devotees of the weird doctrine practice the most fanatical rites, preach the wildest theories and work themselves into a state of mad excitement in their peculiar zeal. Colored people and a sprinkling of whites compose the congregation, and night is made hideous in the neighborhood by the howlings of the worshippers, who spend hours swaying forth and back in a nerve-racing attitude of prayer and supplication. They claim to have the 'gift of tongues' and to be able to comprehend the babel.[2]

The reporter felt that the new movement was fanatical and irrelevant. Little did anyone realize that this new movement would become the fastest growing religion that ever hit America.

Los Angeles in April of 1906, boasted a population of 228,298, an increase of 30,684, over the past year. Every month 2,789 people were coming to live in this city each one bringing his own ideas of religion.

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[1]Synan, The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States, p. 95.

[2]Los Angeles Times, April 18, 1906, p. 1.

When the Pentecostal movement developed in 1906, a large number of Blacks and immigrants resided in Los Angeles. It is, therefore, easy to see why it was among the Blacks and the more emotional nationalities that the pentecostal movement took root.

One man whose activities paved the way for the pentecostal movement was Frank Bartleman. Bartleman, a holiness minister, was well known in holiness circles. Deeply impressed by the Welsh revival, he began to work toward a similar revival in Los Angeles. In 1904, the Welsh revival had converted over 30,000 people. Bartleman wrote to Roberts in Wales asking him to pray for a new Pentecost in Los Angeles. Anxious for such a revial in Los Angeles, he wrote a tract entitled "The Last Call" in which he prophesied, "Some Tremendous event is about to transpire".[1] Bartleman's prophesy was to come true the next month.

W. J. Seymour, a Black man born in Louisiana, received his theological training from Charles Parham at the Bible training school in Houston, Texas. He had built a reputation in his area as a very humble man, but one extremely interested in holiness religion. Described by many as a "dirty" and "collarless" minister, he hardly seemed to be the person to lead the historic revival that ushered in pentecostalism.

Many people visited the services at the school and many received the pentecostal experience as Parham taught it. Among those who came and received the spirit was a Black lady from Los Angeles, Miss Neely Terry. Later returning to Los Angeles, she found that her family and some of her close friends had been excommunicated from the Black Second Baptist Church for professing holiness doctrines. They had formed a small holiness mis-

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[1] Frank Bartleman, How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles (Los Angeles, 1925), pp. 5-43.

sion and had elected a Miss Hutchinson as acting pastor. Miss Terry suggested that they invite Seymour to come and take the position as pastor. Seymour accepted the invitation and arrived in Los Angeles early in April.

When Seymour preached his first sermon at the Nazarene Church on San Fe Street, he took as his text Acts 2 and declared that speaking in tongues was the initial evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit, although he as yet had not received the experience. Miss Hutchinson, feeling that this teaching was contrary to accepted holiness views, locked the church door the next night to keep him out, although most of her members enthusiastically accepted his message. The Evangelist, with no place to stay in the city, was invited to stay in the home of Richard Asbury, who at that point refused to accept his teachings. The Evangelist then began to preach in the living room of the home on Bonnie Brae Street.

For several days, prayer services continued in the Asbury home until the night of April 9, 1906, when Seymour and seven others fell to the floor in a religious ecstasy, speaking with tongues. The news of the unusual events on Bonnie Brae street spread quickly through the neighborhood as the newly baptized enthusiasts went to the front porch to conduct their strange services. In the services that followed, demonstrations of tongues were so pronounced that huge crowds gathered in the streets to see what was happening. As crowds pressed into the house and onto the porch, the pressure became so great that at one point a floor caved in, but no one was hurt.[1]

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[1]R. L. Fidler, "Historical Review of the Pentecostal Outpouring in Los Angeles at the Azusa Street Mission in 1906," The International Outlook (January-March, 1963), pp. 3-14.

Seymour decided to find larger quarters where revival services could be conducted in a more conventional manner. An old abandoned Methodist church building at 312 Azusa street was secured to continue the meetings. The old two-story building was a shambles. The windows and doors were broken out and debris littered the floor, but the old building was ideal for the meetings. At the Azusa Mission the poorest of the lower class could come and not be intimidated by the stained glass trappings of the traditional church. In these pretentious surroundings, Seymour began to preach to the crowds that followed him from Bonnie Brae street.[1]

As soon as Seymour began preaching at the Apostolic Faith Mission, as it was called, a monumental revival began. Scores of people began to fall under the power and arise speaking in other tongues. The Los Angeles Times described Seymour as "an old colored exhorter" who acted as "major-domo of the company", the reporter felt his "stony optic" eye served to hypnotize unbelievers.[2] Old "colored mammys" were seen to "gurgle wordless talk" in a freanzy of religious zeal."[3] This first news release of the Azusa Street Revival ended with a prophecy that had been given in a vision to a man in the service. In his vision, he saw the people of Los Angeles "flocking in a mighty stream to perdition." He then prophesied "awful destruction to this city unless its citizens are brought to a belief in the tenets of the new faith."[4]

Awful destruction came the very next day, but to San Francisco in stead of Los Angeles. On April 18 an earthquake shook San Francisco.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[2] Los Angeles Times, p. 1.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

The worshippers of the Azusa Street Revival felt that there was a divine connection between the two. After the earthquake in San Francisco, large numbers flocked to the Azusa Street Revival.

As the Azusa Street Revival continued, hundreds and later thousands of both the curious and the serious came to the mission. Every day trains unloaded large numbers of people who came from all over the continent. News accounts of the meeting spread over the nation in both the religious and secular press. The Way of Faith, published in South Carolina, and The Apostolic Faith, published from Azusa Street, carried minute accounts of the meetings in Los Angeles.

In the meetings men and women would shout, weep, dance, fall into trances, speak and sing in tongues, and interpret the message into English. Anyone who felt moved by the spirit would preach or sing. There was no order of service, and no choir, just an abundance of religious enthusiasm. In the middle of it all was Elder Seymour, who rarely preached and much of the time kept his head covered in an empty shoe box behind the pulpit.[1]

As the meetings continued more and more people began to attend, until by the summer of 1906 people of every race and nationality in the Los Angeles areas were mingling into the crowds at the mission. Blacks, whites, Chinese, and Jews attended side by side to hear Seymour preach. Eventually what began as a local revival in a Black church became of interest to people all over the nation.

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[1] Frank J. Ewart, The Phenomenon of Pentecost, A History of the Latter Rain (St. Louis: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1947), p. 40.

Throughout 1906 the revival increased in fervor and interest. In August, Bartleman wrote to the Way of Faith that "Pentecost has come to Los Angeles, the American Jerusalem."[1] The paper issued by the mission indicated that hundreds were speaking with tongues in addition to the numbers saved, sanctified and healed. It was reported that a woman named Anna Hall had gone to a Russian church in Los Angeles and preached in their own language, although it was unknown to her. By the end of the year many other missions had been opened in the Los Angeles area and others were beginning to operate in cities all over the United States.

As the revial continued many attended who were critical of the meetings. Some felt that the extreme emotionalism that characterized the services was fake. Soon such physical demonstrations as the "jerks" and "treeing the devil" were in evidence in the mission. Before long spiritualists and members from the numerous occult societies of Los Angeles began to attend and to contribute their seances and trances to the services.[2]

Disturbed by these developments, Seymour wrote Parham for advice on how to handle the meetings and asked him to come to Los Angeles to take over the revival. Parham had been receiving reports from others that the meetings were characterized by stunts common in old camp meetings among colored folk. He was even more disturbed to hear that white people were imitating what he called unintelligent crude negroisms of the Southland and putting it on the Holy Ghost. Parham, therefore, sent word to Seymour that he had another engagement and to continue the service as

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[1]Bartleman, How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles, p. 54.

[2]Synan, The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States, p. 110.

he saw fit.

Things were getting out of hand. Seymour attempted to de-emphasize tongues but his efforts were futile. When Parham arrived in October of 1906, he was shocked by the services and made efforts to correct the extremes and fanaticism. After Parham had preached two or three sermons he was asked to leave the mission by some of Seymour's followers. He was asked to leave because of his denunciation of the "hypnotists and spiritualists" that attended the meetings. After Parham was barred from the mission, Seymour and his instructor never met on good terms again. For the rest of his life, Parham continued his denunciation of the Azusa Street Revival as a case of "spiritual power prostituted" to the awful "fits and spasms" of the "holy rollers and hypnotists."[1]

During the three years that the Azusa Street Revival continued, reports were written by visitors from all parts of the world who had attended the services. Hundreds of ministers from all over the world traveled to Los Angeles to see for themselves what was taking place. Most of them were convinced of the genuineness of the practices and many received their own pentecost with the evidence of speaking with tongues before returning to their churches. Many who came to the revival were destined to start entire denominations of pentecostal churches. In later years anyone who had taken a very active part in the Azusa revival was looked on with great respect.

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[1]Sarah E. Parham, The Life of Charles F. Parham, Founder of the Apostolic Faith Movement (Joplin: The Tri-State Printing Company, 1930), pp. 164-202. One probable reason why Seymour rejected his authority was the report that Parham was a practicing homosexual, a charge often made and denied by Parham. See Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement, p. 19.

The Azusa Street Revival is considered the beginning of the Pentecostal Movement. Although many had spoken in tongues before 1906, it was the Azusa revival that brought its attention to the world. Most of the pentecostal missions today can directly, or indirectly trace their beginning to the Azusa Street Revival. The Mission continued to function as an independent Black church after the revival ended in 1909, with the white people leaving it in exclusive charge of the Blacks. Seymour later left the church and traveled the United States as an evangelist. The building was torn down in 1928, some years after Seymour's death. The one-eyed Black pentecostal minister had started a revival that began a new chapter in the history of Christianity.

CHAPTER III

BLACK PENTECOSTALS

While Blacks in America are searching for a genuinely black theology, they might do well to rediscover that an authentic black faith already exists. It is known as Pentecostalism.[1]

If this description of Pentecostalism as a black faith is offensive to some whites, especially to those within the movement itself, the reason may be a general lack of knowledge about the origins of the Pentecostal movement. For the origins of the movement--which includes practicing charismatics in nearly every denomination are distinctively African and Afro-American.[2]

In an age of Jim Crowism and white supremacy, the fact that Blacks and whites worshipped together in equality among the pentecostals is a significant exception to existing racial attitudes. Even more significant is the fact that the groups that were at odds with each other, the poor whites, and the poor Blacks, were the ones that took an active part in the movement.

During the period when Pentecostal groups were forming recognizable

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[1] James S. Tinney, "Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement," Christianity Today, October 8, 1970, p. 4.

[2] Ibid.

denominations, Blacks and whites shared equal positions as officials, preachers, and members. The racial split came because of the existing patterns of race relations in the United States when the movement began in 1906.

By 1900 the racial lines in American religious life had already been drawn by the harsh realities of the post-civil war era. The freeing of the slaves had caused a grand division of Protestantism along racial lines.[1] The most cherished dream of the black slave was to have his own church. With the end of the war he was free to worship as he wanted. Immediately after 1865, worship services continued to be integrated, but problems soon arose that led to all-white and all-black denominations. Whites resented having large numbers of blacks in their churches, which often was about half of the congregation. Blacks on the other hand, did not like having whites dominate the services. The Blacks wanted their own churches and ministers so that they could conduct services in their own more emotional manner. In the years following the Civil War, Blacks left the white church and formed all black denominations.

Because of the racial situation in the early twentieth century, many Blacks also left the holiness associations. From this separation two large holiness denominations were formed, that later became Pentecostal. The first was the United Holy Church which began in 1886 in Methos, North Carolina. This church generally followed the white holiness churches of North Carolina, until 1906 when they adopted the Pentecostal doctrine. The Church of God and Christ, which became the largest black body of

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[1] Synan, The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States, p. 166.

either the Holiness or Pentecostal movements also began at this time, under the leadership of C. H. Mason and C. P. Jones.

Although the United Holy Church and the Church of God in Christ were functioning denominations in 1906, neither played a direct role in the beginning of the Pentecostal Revival at Azusa Street. As has been seen, the leading figure in the Azusa Street meeting was Seymour. That the one outstanding personality in bringing about the pentecostal revival was a Black man, is a fact of extreme importance to pentecostals of all races. All pentecostals acknowledge their debt to Seymour, although few are willing to recognize him as the founder of the movement. Black pentecostals refer to him as the "Apostle and Pioneer" of the movement and often attempt to demonstrate that the pentecostal movement began as a Black phenomenon, later accepted by whites.[1]

It is believed by many that the Azusa Street Revival was conducted on the basis of complete equality. The President of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Leonard Lovett, gives reason to believe that the meetings on Azusa Street were not always based on equality.

Lovett interviewed a participant observer of the Azusa Street Revival, Bishop Mack E. Jonas. During the taped interview, Jonas indicated that he was among the first Blacks to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, during the meetings on Bonnie Brae Street. He knew Seymour and Parham personally. Lovett says that based on the interview, it is doubtful whether Parham assumed any kind of leadership role in the revival or was asked by Seymour to help curb certain excesses. It is also doubtful that Parham's revivals were interracial based on the interview with

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[1]Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement, pp. 42-53.

Jonas. Parham was said to have conducted segregated altar calls, with the whites on one side and Blacks on the other. William J. Seymour defied the racist mentality of his time and opened the revival to anyone. When Lovett asked Jonas who should be called the father of the twentieth century movement, Jonas replied "Seymour."[1]

After the Azusa Street Revival ended, several Pentecostal denominations emerged. The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, which was established in 1914, believed in equality among the races and was completely interracial in its beginning. But in the end, the Southern system of segregation split the church. It was a southern law that no racially integrated meeting could be held below the Mason Dixon Line. Therefore, all Pentecostal meetings were held in the North. Most of the ministers in the North were Black, and the majority in the South were white. With meetings being in the North, fewer whites could attend, and were out-voted on most issues. The white ministers insisted on having a meeting in the South and held one in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1921. This meeting appeared threatening to the Black pentecostal ministers.

The climax came at the annual conference of the church in St. Louis. The whites met early in the week, and held a conclave which they called a continuation of the meeting in Little Rock. It was during this meeting that they decided to leave the integrated denomination and form their own association. It was then that the all-white Pentecostal Alliance was formed in Jackson, Tennessee in 1925. Thus ended the interracial Pentecostal Association.

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[1]Leonard Lovett, "Perspective on the Black Origins of the Contemporary Pentecostal Movement," The Journal of the I. T. C., October, 1972, pp. 45-46.

Several other Pentecostal denominations were interracial, but they also eventually split. The Blacks, wanting more self-government and independence, left the white dominated denominations.

There are several reasons why Blacks adopted the Pentecostal religion. The emotionalism that characterized the pentecostal services held a strong appeal to Blacks. Blacks were already accustomed to the spirited modes of worship in the Baptist and Methodist churches from which they came. When the traditional churches began to add more form and decorum to their services, the emotionally inclined Black gravitated to the pentecostal churches. At least 80 percent of the members of Black pentecostal churches came from other churches, particularly from Baptist and Methodist denominations.[1] However, there is little difference between Black pentecostal churches, and Black protestant churches.

Another reason that Blacks were attracted to Pentecostalism is that it started as a religion for the poor. The poor who felt alienated from the middle class church could retreat to the pentecostal church. For the most part, pentecostals came from the lower socio-economic level. In the early period of Pentecostalism, the laboring classes, and the poverty-stricken made up the movement.

Also contributing to the popularity of Pentecostalism was the fact that education for the minister was not necessary. If a person felt the call to preach he was able to in the Pentecostal church. Black ministers that were unable to receive ministerial training felt that they had a greater chance of preaching in the Pentecostal church than

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[1]Liston Pope, Millhand and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), p. 133.

in the older established churches.

The fact that the beginning of the movement was led by a Black man drew a number of Blacks to the movement. Many Blacks feel that the Pentecostal Movement was primarily a Black phenomenon. This is a source of great pride to Black pentecostals all over the world.

In general, Blacks have been an integral part of the Pentecostal Movement from its beginning and have contributed much to its distinctive character. With over 1,000,000 members in the United States in 1965, they comprised 5 percent of the total Black population. This was more than twice the national percentage of all pentecostals. Although the Black branches of the movement have grown tremendously over the years, little recognition of this record has been acknowledged by the white churches.

C. H. Mason

C. H. Mason, organizer of the Church of God in Christ, was one of the most prominent pentecostal leaders in America. Mason started out as a Missionary Baptist minister in Mississippi. Mason attended Arkansas Baptist College to further prepare himself for the ministry, but left after three months because he felt "there was no salvation in schools or colleges."[1]

Mason and his associate, C. P. Jones went to Lexington, Mississippi, where they came in contact with the holiness doctrine of entire sanctification. The two men accepted the doctrine and began to preach it to their

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[1]Klaud Kendrick, The Promise Fulfilled: A History of The American Pentecostal Movement (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), p. 197.

congregations. Soon they were expelled from the Baptist Association for preaching holiness views. Churchless, they held a revival in February 1897 in a cotton gin house in Lexington, Mississippi. This meeting led to the establishment of the Church of God in Christ. In the latter part of 1897, the new church was incorporated as a chartered denomination in Memphis, Tennessee. This was the first Southern Holiness denomination to become legally chartered.

In the early part of 1907, news of the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles came to the attention of Mason and Jones. Mason and Jones reacted differently to the events that were said to be occuring in Los Angeles. Mason, who had always believed that God had endowed him with supernatural characteristics, which were manifested in dreams, and visions, was drawn to the pentecostal revival.

C. H. Mason and two of his fellow ministers traveled to Los Angeles to investigate. Arriving in California, they were happy to see that the services were being carried on by a Black man, W. J. Seymour. During their five week stay all three received the experience of speaking with tongues and returned to Memphis as pentecostals.

Upon their return, Mason found that another Azusa veteran, Glenn A. Cook had returned before them and was spreading the pentecostal message. Cook, a white man, had already made many pentecostal converts. Jones, then general overseer of the church, did not believe in the pentecostal doctrine. Soon there was a struggle over leadership of the movement, between the pentecostal faction, under Mason, and the non-pentecostal faction, under Jones. The General Assembly of the church, that met in August 1907 held a lengthy discussion on the pentecostal doctrine. In

the end, Mason and all that believed in the doctrine of speaking with tongues, left the assembly. Jones remained as leader of the non-pentecostal group. He later changed the name to the Church of God (Holiness) U. S. A.

In the late 1907, Mason held an assembly in Memphis, where it was decided to retain the name Church of God in Christ and to add a pentecostal paragraph to the articles of faith. From its reorganization as a pentecostal church in 1907, the Church of God in Christ grew to be the largest Black pentecostal group in America. Today with more than 400,000 members, it is the second largest Pentecostal body in America.

Mason's prestige in pentecostal circles was so great that many white pentecostal ministers were given ordination at his hands. This may be due to the fact that of the pentecostal denominations, only Mason's was legally incorporated. Most white pentecostal churches outside the South were independent and had no ecclesiastical body to ordain their ministers. Because of this, they were unable to obtain bonding for performing marriages or any other ministerial duties. They were also unable to obtain reduced clergy rates on the railroads. Since Mason's church was the only incorporated church white ministers had to obtain ordination from him. A group of white ministers from Alabama and Texas eventually made an agreement with Mason in 1912 to use the name of his church, but to issue ministerial credentials signed by their own leaders. By 1914, these white ministers became dissatisfied with this agreement and formed what was to become the largest white denomination in the United States, the Assembly of God denomination. Many of the leaders had been ordained by C. H. Mason.

The Church of God in Christ owes its existence to Mason. Mason stamped his personality on his church far more emphatically than any other holiness or pentecostal minister. Called by his followers "Greater than the Apostle Paul," Mason outlived all the other founders of holiness sects and saw his group become the largest Black pentecostal sect in America. Mason died in 1963 and was buried in his "Mason's Temple" in Memphis, Tennessee. The street where his temple is located was renamed "Mason Street" in his honor.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The appearance of over a score or more Pentecostal denominations in the U. S. in the twentieth century is a development of great importance in the social and religious life of the nation. The Pentecostal Movement began in the United States, but its theological and intellectual origins were British. The premises on which the movement was constructed were derived by John Wesley in the eighteenth century. The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement, which came out of Methodism, traces its lineage through the Wesleys to Anglicanism and from there to Roman Catholicism. The Pentecostal Movement has been described as the most charismatic movement of the twentieth century.

The rise of the Holiness-Pentecostal Movement came after this enthusiastic type of religious experience was rejected by its chief propagator, the Methodist Church. The Civil War caused a de-emphasis of holiness teachings in Methodism. The Holiness Association attempted to revive an interest in holiness teachings and practices.

The Pentecostal Movement, representing a theological division within the Holiness Movement, was caused by a controversy over the evidence required to prove that one had received the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal Movement held that only by speaking with tongues had one received the Holy Spirit. The faction that refused to accept this view remained

within the Holiness Movement.

The Movement was interracial in origin. The period lasted from 1906, when the Azusa Street Revival started, to 1924 when the last interracial denomination divided on racial lines. One by one the Pentecostal denominations divided into white and Black. Blacks were an integral part of the Pentecostal Movement and have contributed much to its distinctive character.

After 1932, other major Pentecostal groups were formed. The Movement by that time had roughly assumed the form that it is at present. As the Pentecostal denominations began to gain acceptance by society they began to establish accredited colleges, high schools, retirement homes, printing presses, orphanages, and urban rescue missions.

Basically, the Pentecostal Movement is an heir to the old time religion. Pentecostal denominations are probably the only large groups in America that still exhibit the enthusiasm that was characteristic of the old Methodist camp meetings. The Pentecostals still attempt to perpetuate the doctrines of perfectionism and revivalism, which dominated Protestantism during the nineteenth century.

In 1970, it was conceded that the Pentecostal denominations were the fastest growing in the world. It was also apparent that they were beginning to appeal to a large spectrum of American people. Because of this, several Protestant churches have adopted Pentecostal doctrines. The Pentecostal Movement has attracted all types of people from all types of religions.

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